

Corporate Social Responsibility: Before and After a Pandemic

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

Social corporate responsibility is the new way of marketing. We see influencers doing the ice bucket challenge and donating to The ALS Association, local businesses supporting a nearby food pantry, and national companies sponsoring galas and golf outings for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and women's heart health. University organizations and advertising agencies around the globe host a CreateAthon event to help area nonprofits with marketing and communication efforts.

But what happens when all of these events get cancelled at the last minute?

In the coming pages, I will dive into how the McKinley Avenue Agency started to incorporate corporate social responsibility through hosting a CreateAthon event, and how our plans to give back changed when COVID19 took the nation by storm.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor and mentor, Kim Green, for believing in me every step of the way. I wouldn't be the leader I am today without your guidance and unwavering support.

I would like to thank Betsy Meyer for taking a chance on hiring me as a freshman—no other boss has taught me quite as much, or given me as many opportunities to grow, as you have. I wouldn't be who I am today had I not met you.

Lastly, to all of my coworkers at the McKinley Avenue Agency— thank you for making my job the best one at Ball State University.

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Process Analysis Statement

I started my thesis plans last spring. I thought the McKinley Avenue Agency, Ball State's student-run advertising agency, needed organized guidebooks for each division in the Agency, so that we could all remain organized and know what was expected of us, but also set a precedent for future students and leaders within the Agency and provide a tool to refer back to when they weren't sure where to turn next.

The guidebooks are important, but I had no idea I was on the brink of finding something even bigger: CreateAthon.

To preface, CreateAthon's goal is to pair marketing and communications teams with local nonprofits so that the nonprofits can receive pro bono marketing collateral and strategic planning assistance tools they need to "communicate their mission, advance their cause, and impact their communities," according to CreateAthon's website. These nonprofits can be chosen by the marketing and communications teams involved in the CreateAthon event, and all collateral and strategic plans must be created within the 24 hours the CreateAthon event lasts.

Dr. Sparks, chair of the Department of Journalism, reached out to my boss, Betsy Meyer, about bringing back CreateAthon. None of us at the McKinley Avenue Agency were confident in our abilities to organize such an event, and we were confused as to why we should be the ones to head up the movement, since it is a PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America)-

affiliated event. Betsy asked me to coordinate the event since CreateAthon encompasses so much in the way of PR efforts, and hence, my passion project began.

CreateAthon has become an international movement, with marathons being hosted in all corners of the United States to countries as far as Romania. University PR programs have gotten involved, along with large international companies like FleishmanHillard public relations and digital marketing agency. CreateAthon has recruited more than 100 different marketing teams into service as partners, and has delivered more than \$25 million in marketing and communications services to nonprofit organizations committed to social change. CreateAthon is a movement for everyone, to benefit everyone in a community.

When Cardinal Communications PR agency was still separate from the McKinley Avenue Agency, the group hosted CreateAthon each spring. Cardinal Communications had hosted CreateAthon events for over 20 years, and the last year they hosted their pro bono event was spring of 2017. We merged into one agency the following semester.

The leadership team at the McKinley Avenue Agency decided to commit to hosting a CreateAthon event because we wanted to give back to a community that had given us so much in the way of opportunities and support. We are one of 21 universities across the nation that have an advertising agency with accreditation from PRSSA. We are, by far, one of the largest of these 21 accredited agencies as well, which means we can offer more students more opportunities and hands-on learning experiences. None of this would be possible without an

incredible community, both at Ball State and the greater Delaware County, supporting us students and allowing us to create advertising plans for them.

In my research, I learned that Delaware County is the

- 15th largest in terms of population, in Indiana
- 6th most unhealthy, in Indiana, and
- Safer than only 8% of all cities in the United States.

There are many nonprofits in Delaware County that try to tackle several different problem areas, including crime, abuse, homelessness, poverty, and more. We decided to focus on efforts we could relate to as college students: food insecurity, education, and professional development.

Organizing CreateAthon required several areas of expertise pertaining to public relations. In order to make this a success, we had to devote efforts to writing press releases and emails, event planning necessities such as catering, pitching sponsorships to businesses, posting on social media, and keeping track of analytics for the event. Setting up a volunteer event to benefit multiple area nonprofits required most every skill public relations students are taught, and then some— characteristics such as patience and determination cannot easily be taught in the classroom.

In the following pages of my thesis, I will explain which nonprofits we chose and how we decided to tackle both helping the nonprofits and hosting the event itself, and how CreateAthon turned into my senior year passion project.

CreateAthon: Planning, Promotion, and Persistence

There's a lot to be learned in the public relations track at Ball State University. Professors teach best practices for corporate PR, how to get involved in nonprofit PR, and how PR agency life really is.

The one thing they didn't teach much of was social corporate responsibility. There's only so much professors can teach us in their classes, but I found it interesting that none of it focused on corporate social responsibility, which I've found to be a large part of what marketing and communications teams develop for their corporate companies so that the brand may stand out among their competitors.

The most difficult parts of corporate social responsibility is figuring out how to create an event that the company is capable of doing, and how to make it a resounding success. Thankfully, CreateAthon makes it easy for teams to organize a pro bono event. They send a CreateAthon toolkit that outlines the entire process: the team picks the nonprofits involved, they discuss with the nonprofit leaders to determine what is needed to spread their mission to the community and better serve their people. CreateAthon's toolkit explicitly outlines that all work must be free of charge, and all projects must be completed within the 24 hour time frame.

I saw CreateAthon as a challenge and an opportunity for the McKinley Avenue Agency and me to make a difference. I found myself becoming more passionate and excited about CreateAthon-- it only made sense to use it as my honors thesis. I've been given so many

opportunities both while growing up and in college, and some of these happened only through the generosity of others in the community. Ambitious students and their families deserve opportunities to grow and thrive, and each of these nonprofits offer assistance that will help create a successful, bright and stable future for both students and their families.

We reached out to three nonprofits: BY5, Cardinal Kitchen and Teen Works. These nonprofits tackled issues pertaining to kindergarten readiness, food insecurity and professional development, respectively. They were all excited to be included in CreateAthon and were fantastic to work with. We met with leaders from each of the nonprofits, and asked them what their vision for the next six to 12 months was. Once we had a better picture of what the future might bring for these nonprofits, we outlined a game plan for each group (see Appendix 1).

When planning an event, it's important to appeal to both sides of an audience—in this case, who the event is for, and who will attend the event. Most nonprofit events, especially fundraising events, cater to two different audiences; while there may be some overlap, it's not guaranteed, and we must market to both the benefactors and the attendees. Getting the benefactors on board was easy—what nonprofit doesn't want free marketing assistance? It would take more effort to get a team on board, especially since some potential team members were not employed through the McKinley Avenue Agency.

I decided the best way to appeal to these students was to start with emails. Writing emails and setting up a Google or Qualtrics survey for students to sign up with was a piece of cake, but a

promise of students signing up to volunteer was much more difficult (see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3). We had to ask ourselves, “What can we offer these groups in exchange for them volunteering their time?”

College students respond well to freebies and praise. We decided that, in addition to the meals provided, we would create t-shirts (below) and tag them in social media posts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn during and after the event. This offer seemed to work, as we had 31 students sign up to work shifts ranging from three hours to all 24 hours.

PROOF FOR SCREENPRINT APPROVAL

02.28.20

Authorized Signature (I have proofed this page and everything is ok to print): _____

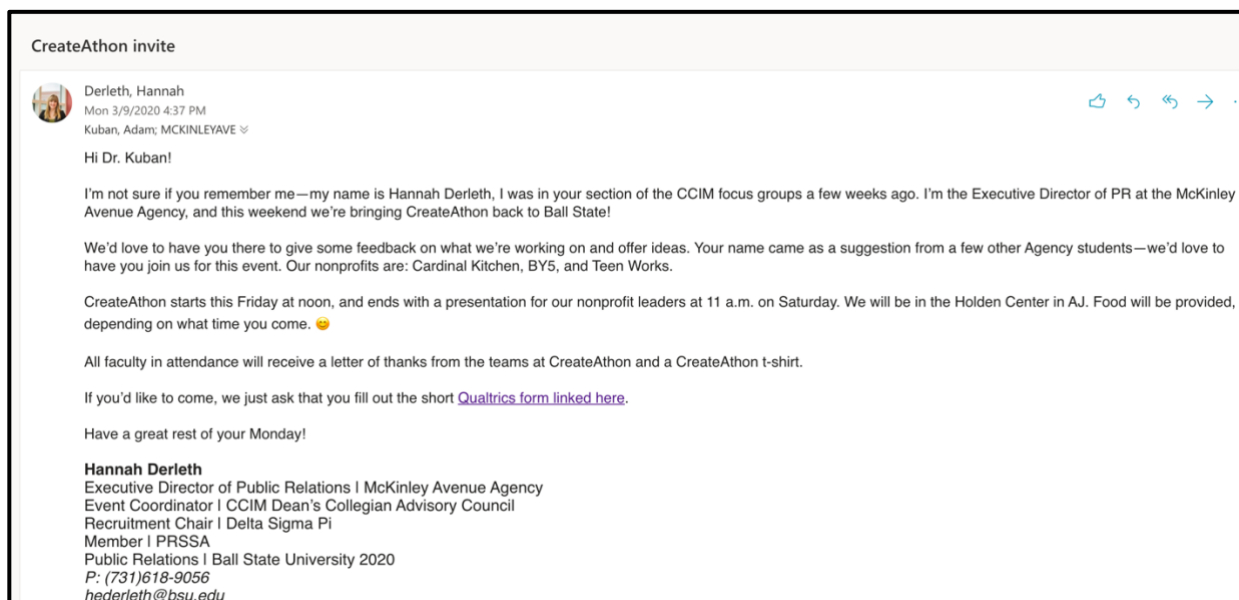
A Signature indicates that everything (color, copy, layout, size, type, quantity, etc) is correct and ready to be produced. You will accept responsibility if there are any errors to the finished job. Please read all the information on this proof page before signing. This proof is for copy and layout only. This is not a color proof. By signing this proof the customer agrees to all terms and cost of job. You will assume all responsibility for the finished work and you agree to pay the total upon completion. Any changes, corrections or redos after the okay to print will be at the customers expense. In the event of nonpayment the customer is responsible for all costs of collections, including attorney's fees.

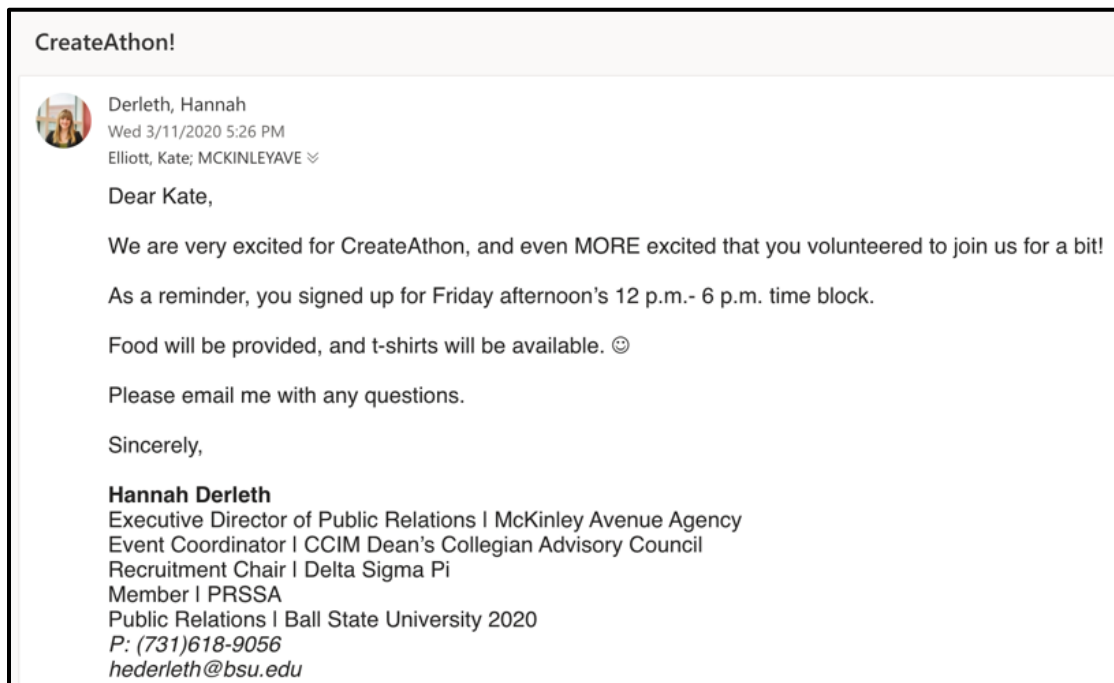
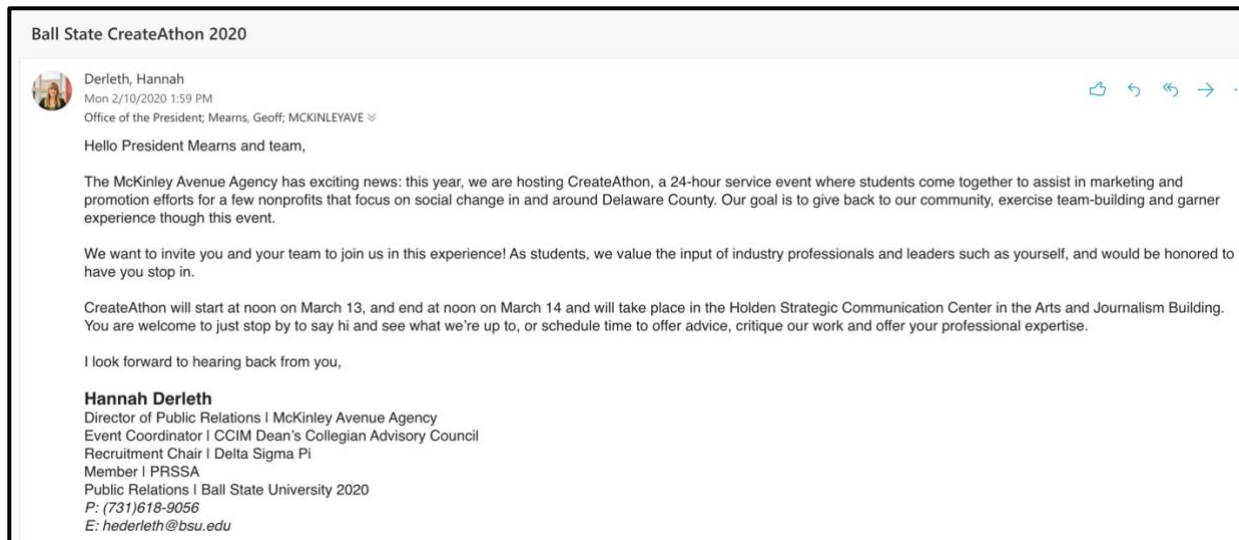


We know how busy and chaotic students' schedules can get, so we also made a point to send a reminder email a few days before the event (see Appendix 4). We decided to set up the students' signup survey on Google not only because they are more familiar with the platform, but also because it's easy to go back and view what answers they provided.

While freebies are great, getting professors and outside professionals to attend for an hour or two would require a different reward of sorts from us.

As for professors, we decided to encourage them to attend by offering thank-you letters for them to pair with their application for tenure and other bonuses offered by the Department of Journalism and College of Communication, Information and Media. Most professors need to show they are involved in Ball State students outside of their classroom sessions, so advising student clubs like PRSSA, leading a committee for diversity or volunteering their time with events like Dance Marathon, blood drives or CreateAthon lead to a better chance of them earning tenure. We also made sure to email them again a few days before CreateAthon to remind them both of the event and which time frame they signed up for.





We thought reaching outside professionals would be the most difficult of the three groups, as we didn't have anything to offer them; however, we found that several of the invited professionals were more than happy to come for a few hours to provide guidance and input. One of our professionals wanted to bring a few coworkers from her office at VOX Global in Indianapolis—it was encouraging notes like those that really made us excited to host this event.

Forwarded message
From: **Derleth, Hannah** <hederleth@bsu.edu>
Date: Mon, Feb 10, 2020 at 11:22 AM
Subject: Ball State CreateAthon 2020
To: hjriffle@gmail.com <hjriffle@gmail.com>
CC: MCKINLEYAVE <mckinleyave@bsu.edu>

Good morning Hannah!

The McKinley Avenue Agency has exciting news: this year, we are hosting CreateAthon, a 24-hour service event where students come together to assist in marketing and promotion efforts for a few nonprofits that focus on social change in and around Delaware County. Our goal is to give back to our community, exercise team-building and garner experience through this event.

We want to invite you to join us in this experience! As students, we value the input of industry professionals and would be honored to have you stop in and give us your opinions on our work.

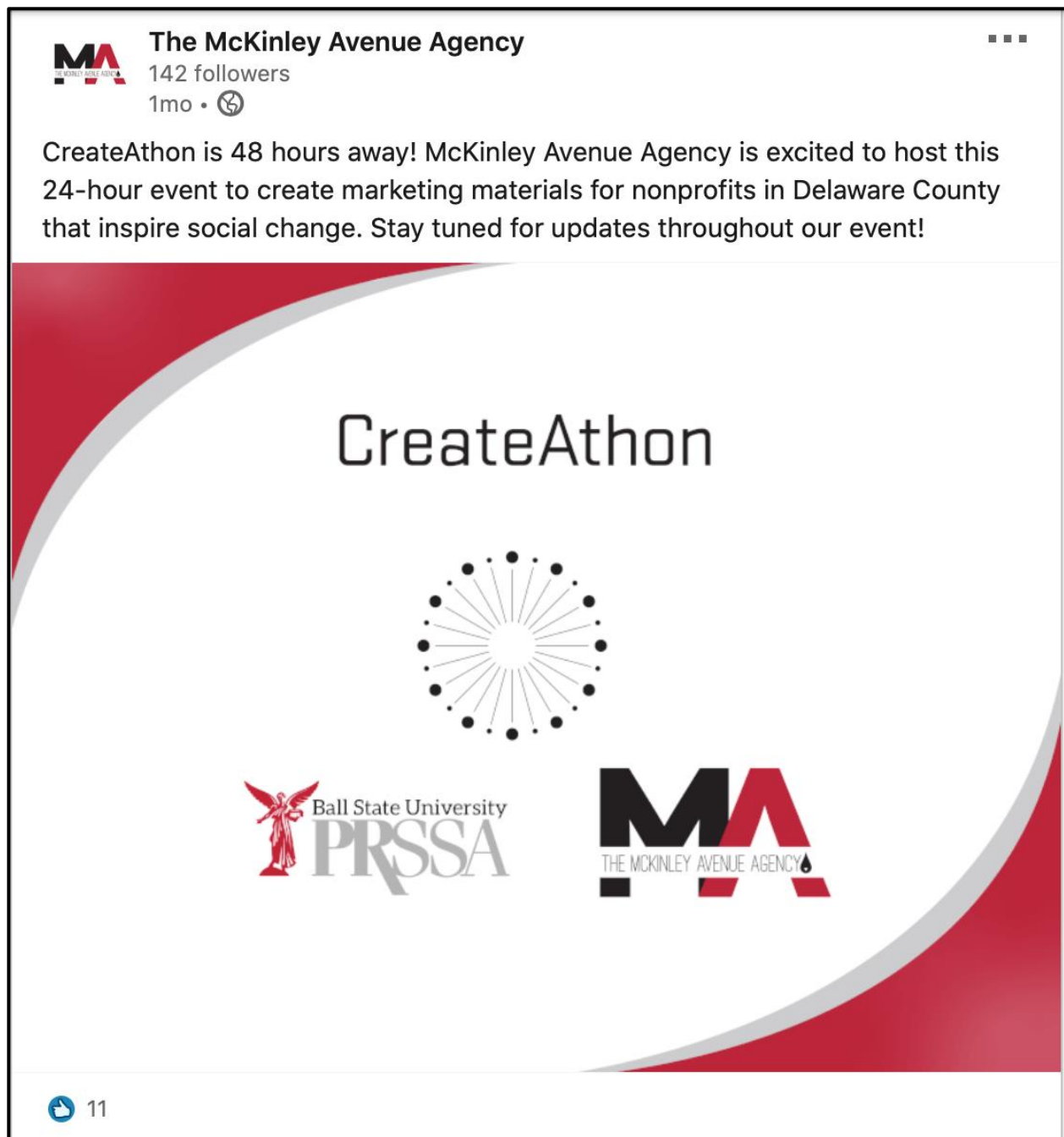
CreateAthon will start at noon on March 13, and end at noon on March 14 and will take place in the Holden Strategic Communication Center. You are welcome to just stop by to say hi and see what we're up to, or schedule time to offer advice, critique our work and offer your professional expertise. We would love to have a Cardinal Communications alumna working on this with us!

I look forward to hearing back from you,

Hannah Derleth

Director of Public Relations | McKinley Avenue Agency
Event Coordinator | CCIM Dean's Collegian Advisory Council
Recruitment Chair | Delta Sigma Pi
Member | PRSSA
Public Relations | Ball State University 2020
P: (731)618-9056
E: hederleth@bsu.edu

We also had to think about general promotion efforts. We had planned a few social media posts and had press releases ready to send out to a few local media outlets, including the Star Press (see Appendix 5). While pre-promotion was important, we decided to focus our efforts on sharing the good news after CreateAthon, that way we could report the analytics of the event, such as how many volunteer hours were given, how many outside professionals and professors attended, and how many goals and projects we were able to complete in the 24 hour window.



Due to the coronavirus pandemic, we never got to create the strategic communication plans or the collateral mentioned in the outlines. The plan right now is to host CreateAthon in the fall, probably September, and include the same nonprofits we already had on board. New meetings

will have to be set up, the team will have to come up with a different game plan, but I'm glad the same nonprofits will still get the assistance they were promised.

From: Derleth, Hannah <hederleth@bsu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 12:05 PM
Cc: MCKINLEYAVE <mckinleyave@bsu.edu>
Subject: Re: CreateAthon!

Hello!

Again thank you so much for volunteering to check out our work at CreateAthon!

In light of recent events, we have decided to postpone our CreateAthon event. We will send another invite with the new date included once we have plans finalized.

We hope to see you at our rescheduled CreateAthon event! Thank you for understanding.

Hannah Derleth

Director of Public Relations | McKinley Avenue Agency
Event Coordinator | CCIM Dean's Collegian Advisory Council
Recruitment Chair | Delta Sigma Pi
Member | PRSSA
Public Relations | Ball State University 2020
P: (731)618-9056
E: hederleth@bsu.edu

While CreateAthon didn't go according to plan, I am excited to see what happens when the Agency hosts it this coming fall semester. I have no doubt the PR team will be able to organize and execute a fantastic event and give the nonprofits the assistance and collateral they were promised.

Social Corporate Responsibility: Take Two

COVID19 has been, and as of today, still is, taking a toll on so many businesses. Events are still being cancelled left and right, even the ones that people “counted on,” like March Madness, graduation ceremonies and even dentist appointments.

We may not be able to fix everything, but the team at McKinley Avenue Agency felt like we still needed to give back. We asked ourselves, “How can we give back without spending money?” and, “What other resources can we share, outside of the event?” We took a weekend to think about what we wanted to do and if we could even do anything to help those around us.

While we couldn’t ease the pain of missing exciting and/or necessary events, or donate money to those struggling, we realized we have one tool that can impact large groups of people: digital advertising.

The McKinley Avenue Agency manages the Ball State Daily social media channels. On Facebook, we have 5,148 followers; on Twitter we have 2,226 followers and on our new Instagram page we have 774 followers. This gives us access to an entirely different audience than, say, the audience Art Mart in the Village has on their social media pages.

In comparison, Art Mart in the Village has 1,206 Facebook likes, 103 followers on Instagram and no Twitter account. Art Mart offers a great service and wide selection of products for every art

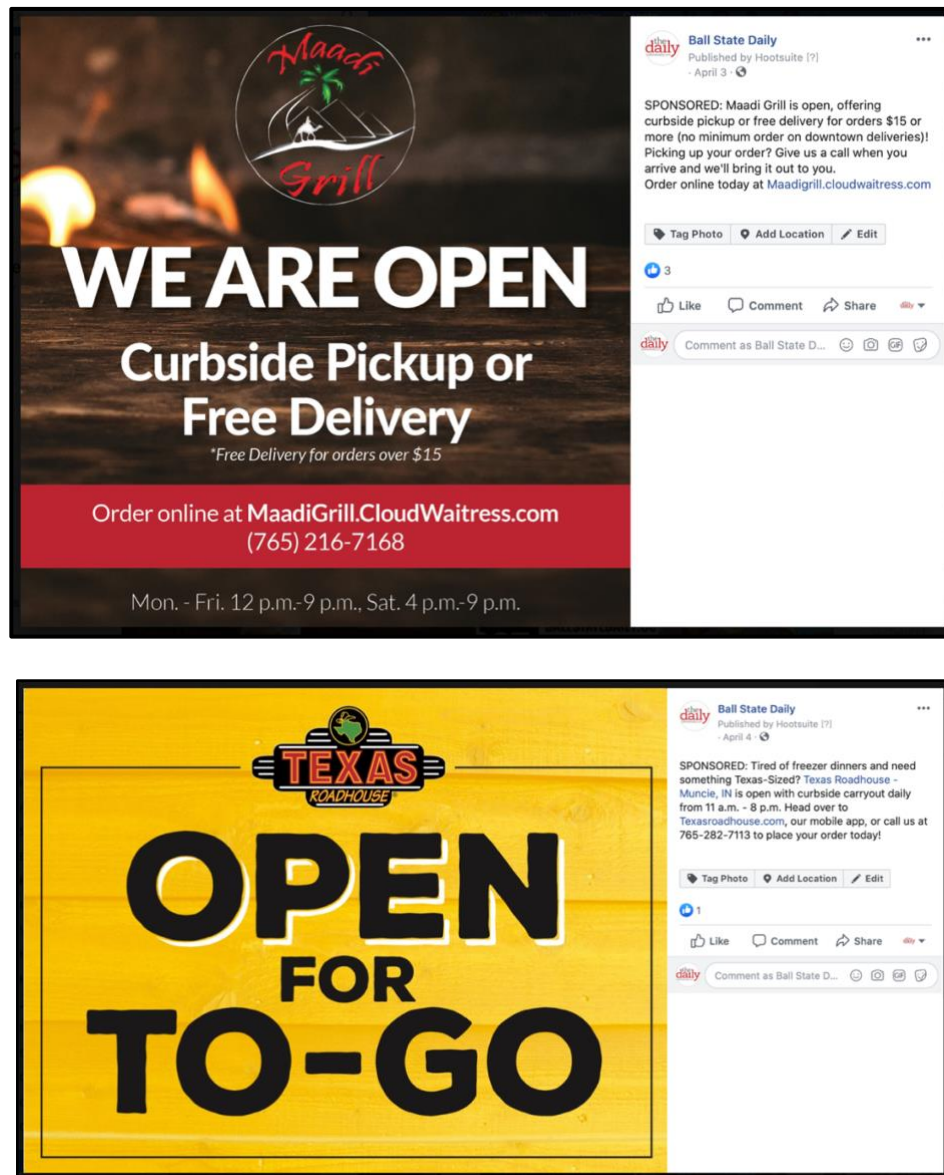
major, art lover, and creative mind; but they either don't know how, or don't have the resources, to really dial in on their digital marketing efforts.

Thankfully, we figured out a way to give back to the community: free online advertising options. We started out with just restaurants in Muncie because we weren't sure how well the idea would take off. We made posts on both the McKinley Avenue Agency and Ball State Daily social media pages, so we could reach as many people as possible.



We had several area restaurants, both family-owned like Maadi Grill and franchise-style restaurants like Texas Roadhouse, inquire about free advertising. Restaurant owners became our biggest fans after seeing how the analytics on social media posts and online advertisements

on the Ball State Daily website. Because both the Agency and the restaurants were seeing success with the free online advertising, we decided to extend the offer to non-restaurant, family-owned businesses in Muncie, like Art Mart, as long as they were offering shopping experiences that followed social distancing rules, like online shopping or curbside delivery.



We started promoting free online advertising options as soon as Indiana was shut down, the week of March 16. We saw a great response from area businesses, and it really made me think

twice about corporate social responsibility and how businesses can make a difference in their respective communities.

Since declaring mandatory social distancing measures, we've seen companies all over the nation refresh their commitment to helping others and giving back. Media outlets are inundated by coverage on COVID19 stories, but there's still so many good, uplifting stories in the news that have come from this pandemic:

- Amazon announced a \$5 million relief fund for small businesses in the vicinity of its headquarters.
- Google pledged \$1 million to organizations in Mountain View, California, impacted by the pandemic.
- Mark Cuban is reimbursing employees who purchase lunch and coffee from local restaurants.
- Restaurants all over the country are donating meals to healthcare heroes and essential workers.
- Communities and small businesses are creating Little Free Pantries, a spin-off of Little Free Libraries, so their neighbors who may not be able to afford groceries can still eat.

I'll be interested to see how both large corporations, like Amazon and Google, and small businesses change after the pandemic is over. Corporate social responsibility isn't just something all businesses should try to do: it creates a deeper relationship and drives

engagement with customers who value morals and ethics, and those who may consider themselves to be more contemporary.

While this wasn't what we envisioned when it came to corporate social responsibility, our ability to help with advertising was exactly what the Muncie community needed during a time of struggle. I'm glad we were still able to give back to our community so that we can come out of this struggle together.

Sources

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Appendices

Appendix 1	Teen Works Proposal
Appendix 2	Google Survey for student sign-ups
Appendix 3	Qualtrics Survey for professor sign-ups
Appendix 4	Student reminder email
Appendix 5	Press Release, CreateAthon promotion
Appendix 6	Article on Agency giving back, from <i>www.insideindianabusiness.com</i>



CreateAthon & Teen Works

24-hour event catering to nonprofits' marketing and communication needs.

From: Hannah Derleth
Executive Director of Public Relations | McKinley Avenue Agency

To: Kari Wissel
Regional Director | Teen Works

Date: February 26, 2020

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Solution Statement	4
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Thank You!

We cannot tell you how excited we are to have you on board with our plans for CreateAthon 2020!

CreateAthon's mission is to bring people with creative superpowers together for good and inspire social change, through one big day of service. We're excited to put our superpowers to good use too, for several good causes in Muncie.

We have so many plans in the works for Teen Works, we cannot wait to hear what you think of our proposal in the upcoming pages.

This has been a momentous year for us— between learning how to be successful practitioners of public relations and communications, and seeing the work we do make a difference in the lives of others, we can safely say we are doing exactly what we were meant to do.

We've had quite the community, both at Ball State University and elsewhere in Muncie, rally behind us since our formation in the fall of 2017. Now, we want to give back to the town that has given us so much in the way of learning experiences and opportunities to grow and fly. What better way than to work with a nonprofit that has shaped people in Muncie as much as Teen Works has?

Thank you for allowing us to help Teen Works with its marketing needs. We're ready to dive in and start making a difference with you.

Problem Statement

To empower teens to achieve excellence in community, college & career.

Empower. It's such a strong, impactful word, but it makes sense: it is what Teen Works is all about. The team at Teen Works is passionate about inspiring, motivating and empowering young minds of Muncie, and we want to help strengthen that reach in any way we can.

Teen Works needs assistance in the following areas:

- Social media appeal to 15-18 year olds
- Fundraising event planning and promotion

The following proposal outlines plans we have to assist with both the general marketing activities of Teen Works, and marketing and promotion plans specifically for the upcoming fundraising event.

All you have to do is sign the last page of this document, which states you understand what our goals are during the CreateAthon event and how we plan to help you. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ball State's CreateAthon Coordinator, Hannah Derleth, at hederleth@bsu.edu.

Plan of Action

General Outreach:

- Create social media posts aimed at 15-18 year old teens in Muncie, Indiana
 - Create graphics and copy
 - Set up social media scheduler if one is not already in use by Teen Works
 - Idea: reach out to students to get quotes on their experience
 - Idea: "What can Teen Works do for you?" mini-campaign

Fundraising Event

- Logo creation
- Strategic plan for and creation of social media posts
- Graphics for online usage (social media, website, online ads, etc.)
- Press releases (Star Press, Ball State Daily News, Muncie Journal, etc.)

Brand Materials Needed

In order to complete the list of deliverables on page 4, we will need the following files from you:

- Teen Works logos.
 - Black, white, and color versions preferred
 - Brand book/guidelines (if applicable)
 - Photos of current Teen Works students (candid photos, headshots, events, etc.)
 - Any do's and don'ts outside of the brand book

Completion Goal

Our goal is to have any deliverables, digital or print versions, completed and sent to you Monday, March 16, 2020 by 11:59 p.m.

We will keep digital versions of these deliverables saved in our records for up to one year.

We do not have print capabilities for any collateral, we can only design collateral.

Agreement

By signing below, you agree with the following statements:

- _____ I have read the pages in this document, and
- _____ I have viewed and agreed to the projected plan for marketing collateral for Teen Works, and
- _____ Hannah Derleth and the CreateAthon teams have permission to use Teen Works logos, photos and likeness for promotion of the event, both digitally and in print.

Signature of Teen Works Advisor: _____

Date: _____

Signature of CreateAthon Coordinator: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2

CreateAthon Scheduling

Hi team! For CreateAthon, we need to know WHEN you can be there to help, and what your strengths are! This way, we can divide up teams appropriately.

Starts Friday, March 13 @ noon and ends with presentations Saturday, March 14 @ 11 a.m. with our nonprofit leaders. Everyone will be able to leave by noon on Saturday.

Our nonprofits are: By5, Teen Works, and Cardinal Kitchen. If you'd like to do more research on these nonprofits, feel free!

1. Name:

2. BSU email?

3. What group are you with? (More than one can be selected, if applicable)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ AAF
- ☐ Ball Bearings
- ☐ Byte
- ☐ Cardinal Metrics
- ☐ Daily News
- ☐ McKinley Avenue Agency
- ☐ NewsLink
- ☐ Office of Outreach and Engagement/Journalism Ambassadors
- ☐ PRSSA
- ☐ SportsLink
- ☐ WCRD

4. What times can you assist with CreateAthon? (Please put down ALL that apply. The more assistance we have, the more we can help these nonprofits!)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Friday 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.
- ☐ Friday 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.
- ☐ Friday 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.
- ☐ Friday 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.
- ☐ Friday 5 p.m. - 6 p.m.
- ☐ Friday 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.
- ☐ Friday 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

- Friday 8 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Friday 9 p.m. - 10 p.m.
- Friday 10 p.m. - 11 p.m.
- Friday 11 p.m. - Saturday 12 a.m.
- Saturday 12 a.m. - 1 a.m.
- Saturday 1 a.m. - 2 a.m.
- Saturday 2 a.m. - 3 a.m.
- Saturday 3 a.m. - 4 a.m.
- Saturday 4 a.m. - 5 a.m.
- Saturday 5 a.m. - 6 a.m.
- Saturday 6 a.m. - 7 a.m.
- Saturday 7 a.m. - 8 a.m.
- Saturday 8 a.m. - 9 a.m.
- Saturday 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.
- Saturday 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- Saturday 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

5. What are your strengths?! Check all that apply:

Check all that apply.

- Strategic Communication Plans
- Social Media Planning
- Designing Logos
- Designing Graphics
- Creating Collateral (bookmarks, postcards, etc.)
- Written content (press releases, letters, etc.)
- Website Audit
- Website Design
- Website Content development (blogs, rewording major sections on site)
- I'm a sales guy at McAve, I'm game to help wherever I am needed :)
- Other:

6. Any questions or concerns that Hannah can address?

7. Any food allergies we should be aware of?

CreateAthon 2020 with McKinley Avenue Agency

Start of Block: Default Question Block

Sign-Up for CreateAthon 2020 with the McKinley Avenue Agency

Q1 Name:

Q2 During which time frame can you volunteer?
(Note, it is not required for you to stay all six hours)

- ☐ Fri. 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. (1)
 - ☐ Fri. 6 p.m. - Sat. 12 a.m. (2)
 - ☐ Sat. 12 p.m. - 6 a.m. (3)
 - ☐ Sat. 6 a.m. - 12 p.m. (4)
-

Q3 Do we have permission to tag you in CreateAthon posts on Facebook?

- ☐ Yes! (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ I don't have a Facebook (3)

Display This Question:

If Do we have permission to tag you in CreateAthon posts on Facebook? = Yes!

Q8 What is your Facebook handle?

Q4 Do we have permission to tag you in CreateAthon posts on Twitter?

- ☐ Yes! (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ I don't have a Twitter (3)

Display This Question:

If Do we have permission to tag you in CreateAthon posts on Twitter? = Yes!

Q9 What is your Twitter handle?

Q5 Do we have permission to tag you in CreateAthon posts on LinkedIn?

- ☐ Yes! (1)
- ☐ No (2)
- ☐ I don't have a LinkedIn (3)

Display This Question:

If Do we have permission to tag you in CreateAthon posts on LinkedIn? = Yes!

Q10 What is your LinkedIn handle?

Appendix 4

From: "Derleth, Hannah" <hederleth@bsu.edu>

Date: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 5:05 PM

Subject: CreateAthon! YAY!

Happy Wednesday!

Thank you SO much for volunteering to help with CreateAthon! We are SUPER EXCITED to have you all on board.

A few things to keep in mind:

1. Probably the most popular thought of the week: will this event be cancelled? At this point, WE ARE STILL ON FOR FRIDAY. The following is what I've sent to our nonprofits and outside professionals coming in:

"As you may have heard, many colleges across the country are moving to online-only classes through mid-April and canceling events. If Ball State University makes the same decision, we will not cancel CreateAthon entirely, but postpone to it another date. We hope to still be able to do it this Spring (maybe late April), but if it has to be moved to the Fall semester, we will still honor our commitment and hope to create amazing work for you."

2. CreateAthon starts at noon on Friday, March 13 and ends at noon Saturday, March 14.
3. We will have food present at CreateAthon. Our game plan as of now is Jimmy John's around dinner hour, Papa John's as a (nearly) midnight snack, and bagels and cream cheese for breakfast. Chips, spinach dip and soda will be available throughout the event, and I'll be bringing brownies (nut-free, I checked!) and dirt pudding.
4. We have t-shirts! These will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis.
5. Plan on bringing some of the following, depending on how long you're staying:
 - Water bottle
 - Blanket/pillow if you're staying overnight (I may or may not plan on curling up under my desk...)
 - Laptop and charger!!!
 - Phone charger
 - Sanitizer
6. I'm sure you've been wondering what nonprofit you're assigned... teams and what times you signed up for are in the Excel document attached above. 😊 If you're able to/wanting to volunteer longer than you signed up for, you are MORE THAN WELCOME TO DO SO. I will have a sign-in binder somewhere in the Holden Center for you to sign in and out, that way we can successfully track our hours volunteered.

7. We will have both professors and a few professionals swinging by to give us feedback on our ideas and progress—please be on your best behavior.

If you'd like to do a bit of research beforehand:

- **BY5:** <https://www.muncieby5.org/>
- **Cardinal Kitchen:** <https://www.bsu.edu/campuslife/student-life/programs-services/service-opportunities/cardinal-kitchen>
- **Teen Works:** <https://teenworks.org/>

Alright team! I'm SUPER PUMPED to make a difference with you guys—these nonprofits are REALLY looking forward to seeing what we can do. Questions, comments, concerns... my email and phone number are in my signature below.

Peace, love and marketing hoopla,

Hannah Derleth

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Event Coordinator | CCIM Dean's Collegian Advisory Council
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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 12, 2020

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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McKinley Avenue Agency to host CreateAthon event

MUNCIE, IND. – The McKinley Avenue Agency is hosting CreateAthon March 13 and 14, 2020.

“Having our entire agency committed to hosting a successful CreateAthon event is inspiring,” said Ted Irwin, Assistant Director of Public Relations. “I hope this encourages future students of the Agency to continue supporting our area nonprofits.”

CreateAthon is a 24-hour international volunteer movement that brings marketing and communications teams together to “use creative superpowers for good.” During these events, marketing collateral and strategic communication plans are created for nonprofits that inspire social change within the community.

While CreateAthon events are widely popular among university journalism and communications programs in the United States, many corporate communications teams partake in their own CreateAthon events as well.

The McKinley Avenue Agency is Ball State University’s student-run advertising agency. The team consists of roughly 45 students and their advisor, Betsy Meyer.

For more information regarding the updated plan, please contact Executive Director of Public Relations, Hannah Derleth.

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McKinley Avenue Agency is Ball State University’s student-run advertising agency. Our agency strives to empower local businesses and garner professional expertise. Through a variety of creative and strategic tactics, we can provide our clients with innovative, original solutions.

While achieving these goals, our students at the agency hold positions that enhance their professional skills in their field of study.

Ball State Advertising Firm Helping Small Businesses

Wednesday, April 15th 2020, 11:48 AM EDT

Updated: Thursday, April 16th 2020, 9:53 AM EDT

By Wes Mills, Content Manager (insideindianabusiness.com)



The student-run business McKinley Avenue Advertising is offering free advice to small businesses in Muncie during the pandemic. (photo provided)

MUNCIE - A student-run advertising agency at Ball State University is helping small businesses get their message out to consumers during the economic uncertainty of the pandemic.

Leaders at McKinley Avenue Agency, an advertising and media sales agency, says now is not the time for businesses to be silent, even if their doors are closed.

“We had to have honest conversations with our clients quickly,” said Abby Hines, a Ball State junior and the agency’s executive advertising director. “Hearing their worries pushed us to the idea of free advertising.”

Hines and her fellow staff members developed advertising packages that would allow the businesses to reach the Ball State and Muncie communities.

Realizing now was not the time to sell its products, the sales team decided to offer free advertising to help struggling local businesses.

“Coming from a family who owns a small business back in northwest Indiana, I was facing this worry firsthand,” said Hines. “I knew the significance of what we were able to do and why we needed to do it so quickly, no matter the cost to us.”

The student-led business is receiving guidance from the agency’s professional advisor through Ball State’s Unified Media lab.

“Our students are hard-working and compassionate, and they always have the best interest of our customers at heart,” said Betsy Meyer, professional advisor for The McKinley Avenue Agency. “Our teams know that we are here to offer services and products that will actually help and produce results for our clients.”

Four local businesses reached out to take advantage of the opportunity.

“This wasn’t an original idea, but if every agency is able to do this in some way, we could make a huge impact as an industry,” said Hines.